[Shri Sukomal Sen]

the workers, whether in the organised sector or in the unorganised sector or even in sectors like the railways, transport, etc., will be assured of eight-hour duty only instead of the present long duty hours. Even the ten-hour duty has been refused by the locomen. I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether the system of eight-hour duty will be introduced for the entire working class in this country on the occasion of the May Day Centenary Celebrations tomorrow.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: Sir, is it the Question Hour now? I thought the debbate was over long back.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether he will recommend to the industrialists of the country to allow a paid holiday tomorrow to enable the workers to celebrate the May Day Centenary in a befitting manner.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): If you want you can give a clarification; otherwise not.

SHRI P. A. SANGMA: No, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Now we go on to the next item on the agenda and we will have the discussion on the working of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Yes, Mr. M. A. Baby.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

SHRI M. A. BABY (Kerala): Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, for having given me the opportunity to initiate the discussion on the functioning of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Sir, I would like to preface my speech with a quotation from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the year 1985-86.

"The objective of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to inform, educate as well as entertain with a view to creating awareness among the people "about the nation's potential for development and its problems, widening their horizon and soliciting their participation in the implementation of the policies, plans and programmes of the Government for bringing about economic development and social change, achieving national security and promoting national integration. In short, the Ministry provides, through its media units, a live audio-visual link between the people and the Government."

The statement, the so-called statement of objective, of the Ministry is very eloquent. But the problem that we face today is that this pronouncement by the Ministry in its Report and the practice by the Ministry are not in agreement with each other. You will find a wide discrepancy between the promises, proclamations and claims of the Ministry on the one hand and its actual performance and practice on the other. In this situation, though the statement says that the objective of the Ministry is to project the achievements and the developmental process in the country, the Ministry is intended to place the problems faced by our country also. I would like to bring to the notice of this august House that in the matter of placing the problems that our country faces today, the Ministry's efforts are a total failure, to use an euphemism. Here, again, I would like to make a quotation from Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. While making a speech on March 5th, 1962, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said—I quote:

"I feel that freedom from ignorance is as essential as freedom from hunger. The mass media which are very useful have an element of danger in them in that they may be distorted for private gain. The rich group or the rich nation can flood the country and the world through the mass media with its own view of things which may or may not be the correct view."

Sir, more than 20 years ago, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru made this statement. As things stand today, the situation is worse,

and so far as the responsibility of placing the problems of our country is concerned, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry could not achieve anything. On the other hand, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry can rightly claim about projecting the achievements of the country. Here I would like to add that rather the Information and Broadcasting Ministry is projecting an inflated picture about the achievements of our country. I am not stating that there are no achievements in our country. There are achievements. There is progress in our country. I do not say that there is no progress. But in comparison to the desired level of progress, and again in comparison to the distribution of achievements and progress between the various sections of people, the picture is very dismal. But, unfortunately, this fact, this reality, is not being brought to the notice of the masses of our country and the official media has been failing in placing the realities of our country, in reflecting the problems of the country, through the official media and mass media.

Here, Sir, I am not ignoring or undermining the valiant role of a section of our Press in placing the problems of our people in correct perspective. Various periodicals and journals have been bringing the gruesome conditions in which the people in far flung villages, small towns and even in cities, live. In the shadow of skyscrapers and posh clubs, millions of people live a miserable life. We say that they live only because they are not yet dead. Otherwise their's cannot be termed as life at all. So their problems have been brought to the notice of the nation by some sections of the Press, some journalists and some media men. But as enunciated in the objectives of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry Report, while projecting the achievements of our country and showing to the people all the perspectives of development in our country, it is the responsibility of the Ministry to bring to the notice of the people that such and such problems are there in our country, that these are the sad realities that exist in our country. In relation to this responsibility I would like to say that the performance is a total failure.

Sir, not only that, our official media fails in bringing forth the realities of our country to the notice of the masses of the people. Not only Indian reality is not reflected in official media like TV and Radio, but irrelevant foreign imports are allowed without any limit. The dangerous and growing trend is in relation to the copying the format and even taking the idea from foreign productions. If at all we make our own programmes in the country, the ideas and format in the case of most of the programmes are being taken from so many foreign productions. An example at hand is in relation to the serial—that I think has been stopped now—known as 'Khandan'. The format and the idea and the way the whole thing was presented have been copied from a foreign production 'dynasty'.

In addition to it, Sir, I would like to quote from Shri P. C. Joshi's report in relations to the Working Group on Software for Doordarshan:

> "Most relevant for our purpose is the Commission's observation that 'it is in the field of television, more than any other, that anxieties arise about cultural domination and threats to cultural identity.'"

This is the Commission's report quoting from the famous MacBride Commission of 1980 whose title is "International Commission for the Study of Communication Problem". I quote again:

> "This is because television has a 'strongly transnational face'. Being a hungry medium, it has to be fed all the time. The production of television programme is a highiy expensive business for which the poor countries are not always able to provide adequate resources. As a result, in most developing nations the screens are filled for many hours with imported programmes, made originally for audiences in the developed countries; these imports account for half of transmission time. Further, the home produced

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material is often a poor second to imports in the daily programming of developing countries. Another major threat to national culture arises from cheap and titillating programmes produced within a country which are projected through the television day in any day out in order to fill television time."

In this connection, again there is another very relevant and thought-provoking paragraph being quoted in this Report from the MacBride Commission's Report of 1980.

"The best answers to injurious foreign influence are not to be found in negative restrictions. Such influence is most irresistable when it flows into a relative vacuum" (as in the case of our country). People can scarcely be blamed for welcoming even the most worthless and shallow forms of foreign entertainment especially when it is presented, let us remember, with utmost technical sophistication, if the indigenous cultural forms have been allowed to decay. To remain alive, genuinely popular and attractive, these forms must be constantly renewed by fresh talent and fresh content. Writers and artists should be given full encouragement by the community and the appropriate organisation, and allowed to give to their best in an atmosphere of liberty. This is the true safeguard of cultural identity.

Sir, considering the importance of T.V. in a country like ours with half the illiterates of the world, a proper perspective in relation to our media policy is very relevant. We know that of the media, television does occupy a very important position. We have nearly 400 million illiterates in our country. Even those who are literate are not well literate. I may rather say that according to some estimates, only 5 per cent of the population in our country reads newspapers. In such a situation, the visual medium is having a very important place. Another point in relation to this which I would like to bring to the notice of the House is that with the so-called new education policy, the Government is abandoning the responsibility of eradicating illiteracy on the one hand and on the other the Government is abandoning the responsibility of implementing the constitutional stipulation that all those who are below the age of 14 at least will be given compulsory primary education. The Government is trying to abandon this responsibi ity. And interestingly, by starting new TV transmitting centres, the Government is trying to create an illusion that TV can replace schools. Instead of starting new schools, instead of taking the responsibility of opening new schools, the Government is trying to make people believe that TV can replace teachers, schools and things like that. But what is actually happening? Now, the programmes that are being telecast through the TV are causing a tremendous danger to the very cultural traditions of our country. The stuff that is being brought out through the television does not have anything to do with the realities of our country. We have been told, and this is a famous statement by Karl Marx that religion is becoming an opium for the people. But if you go by the kind of programmes that are coming out of the TV, at least for middle-class people, now the TV is also becoming an opium. The famous term used for the television is 'idiot box'. But I would like to say that rather than an idiot box, it is becoming an 'idle box'. Television not only tries to keep people physically idle, but it is trying to make people mentally also idle because the problems that the people face in their every day life are not being discussed on the TV. And most of the programmes that are coming out through the TV prime time have nothing to do with the realities of the country. On the other hand, if at all some meaningful programmes are being brought out, there have been efforts to withdraw such programmes. And my case in point is the famous 'Newsline' brought out by the eminent journalist, Mr. M. J. Akbar. The justification given to withdraw the 'Newsline' was that already you have news bulletins in Hindi and English and why should there be another programme presented by

an individual. But I would like to inform the hon Minister who is present here that the very purpose of the 'Newsline' was something different. Whereas every day the Information and Broadcasting Ministry is getting 30 minutes to propagate their own news, to project whomsoever they want, whatever they want and when they are getting 30 minutes every day, this 'Newsline' was having only 25 minutes twice in a month. This was the reality. I don't have any brief for Mr. M. J. Akbar, but there are some programmes brought out in the 'Newsline' to which one may refer. Though I am not a regular viewer of television, I am told and I happen to see, specially one item on how in some suburbs of Delhi, perhaps, in Seemapuri, young women are brought from the villages of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and how they are being exploited for ulterior purposes. This was shown in one of his pieces and a local policeman was also standing there. So, the crew was asking the local people as to what is happening. The local people said that the police people are in collusion with the criminals. Then immediately the camera turns to the Delhi police boss and he says, "there may be such instances; there may be a few blacksheep in the police but we cannot generalise this kind of a thing." I do not want to go into the details of that programme. But some realities of our country were sought to be brought out through the media. Whenever such meaningful programmes come, external intervention comes, intervention from higher-ups comes. I do not want to say what happened to the screening of the 'New Delhi Times' and what happened to the screening of 'Rajiv's India'. What happened to 'Rajiv's India' explains what is really happening in Rajiv's India in relation to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, and freedom of media. Since there is not much time, I do not want to go into the details of the problems of the workers in the various units under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting like the All India Radio and Doordarshan. The people employed in those organisations have so many problems and grievances and I hope that they will be seriously taken up by the Ministry. At the same time, I am requesting that a Parliamentary Committee may also be constituted to see that their grievances are taken up seriously and to look into them. (*Time Bell rings*).

Now, Sir, before concluding my speech I want to make three more points. Firstly, I want to say that there shou'd be a more balanced presentation of sports programmes on television. At the present moment there is an imbalance or over-exposure given to cricket at the cost of atheletics and other sports. We are prepared to cover any cricket match even if it held on the moon or some other planet. But I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister a specific instance when the prestigius Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup Football Tournament was held in Trivandrum, excepting the finals no other important match was directly telecast or even later on telecast. Now, one of the most important sports events in the world is being held in Jakkarta, *i.e.*, the Thomas Cup Badminton Tournament. Nothing has been done to cover that. Just like that so many instances can be given. A more balanced approach should be there, of course, not at the cost of cricket, but the exposure to cricket should not be at the cost of other sports.

Then I come to arts. Radio and television can play a very important role for unifying our country. Again, I do not want to go into the details of all that. But a proper serious approach is not being followed in relation to this here. Here I want to make only two points. The first point is that in the presentation of various arts, for example, in classical music, in Indian classical music, we have two systems, namely, the Hindustani and the Carnatic. A balanced presentation with sufficient time for both systems of music should be given and more emphasis on classical art form should be given on both radio and television. Time presently given for classical art forms is hardly sufficient specially in T.V. This should be very seriously looked into by the hon. Minister.

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Another aspect that I would like to mention is the obscurantist religious programmes that are being covered by our media in an indiscriminate manner. In this connection, I will narrate to you an incident. I happened to see a programme of the Trivandrum television. In the guise of showing a festival in a temple, and odd barbaric practice of holding a child by a man by means of a hook inserted into his flesh which is attached to a pole and then dangling him before the crowd so as to ward off the spirits, was telecast. This is a kind of religious practice in some parts of Kerala, a very very unfortunate and obscurantist practice, especially practised on children so that the ill-effects on them could be warded off. (*Time Bell rings*). Such programmes have been shown in full detail. And, Sir, we have heard today some unfortunate happenings in Punjab. The approach of our Government towards religion is not on right lines. The media has to play a very important role in keeping the minds of people on secular lines. What the media is doing today is to divide its time for various religions. If fifty minutes are given to a Hindu temple festival, than proportionate time is being given for Christian, Muslim and Sikh festivals also. This is not a secular approach. Religion is a personal affair. Everybody can practise it. But Mass media should not be utilised to propagate the fanatical religious obscurantist ideas. It is a very important point which should be taken note of especially in the background of the unfortunate happenings in States like Punjab and elsewhere.

Sir, I hope that the points raised by me will be seriously taken note of by the Ministry and a more scientific secular, democratic approach will be evolved by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting so that the Ministry can function in a better manner.

With these words, Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you once again and I conclude.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, thank you for permitting me to speak on the performance of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry today. Before I begin to say something about the performance of this Ministry, I would like to say a few words about our Minister who is sitting here. He is the only Minister who used to sit whenever we discussed about any Ministry. I see his smiling face; I do not know why he is so tired today.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH (West Bengal): He looks tired.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir): He is always smiling.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Perhaps he is tired of hearing my Communist friends only because they will never talk truths.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: What is this?

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: That is my opinion.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: He keeps his fingers crossed.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: At least Mohanan will support Mohanarangam.

As far as my feeling is concerned, our country cannot be compared with other countries for the simple reason that we have unity in diversity. We have 75 crores of people in our country. Each and every State of our country can be compared with Eurpean nations. We have 4 or 5 crores of people in each and every State. For example, in Tamil Nadu, we have five crores and my Andhra friends have exceeded that; they have about seven crores. Likewise, each and every State is having more than 2 crores or 3 crores or 4 or 5 crores of population. So, they have to consider this country not as a single country, not as a single nation but it is the United States of India. What is applicable for a single nation with regard to information and broadcasting principles,, will not apply to

our country, because we have got different types of people, having different conventions, different practices, habits, even though we have a particular culture. What is applicable to a particular State will never be applicable to another State. What is applicable to my State cannot be applicable to U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh etc., because we differ—though we do not differ in culture, we differ in taste, in language and in other things. That is why, as I said at the beginning, we have got a very dynamic Minister. Even though he is so tired today, he is smiling at me. I have got the highest regard for him, and I say all these preliminaries because I am going to speak something about his Ministry.

After 1967, differenct States are ruled by different parties. Before 1967, it was ruled by one party. Almost all the Chief Ministers of different States were under the control of the Prime Minister and, therefore, whatever the Prime Minister would say, they had to agree and they had to apply his motivation, rules and regulations. But here, my State is ruled by a different party; his State is ruled by a different party again; likewise, more than half a dozen States are ruled by different parties. And we have different principles. So, what was applicable before 1967, cannot hold good today. Therefore, there should be some amendment. For example, at Kodaikanal, we have a 10 KV relay station. They relay the programme from Delhi which we get there; we do not get the programmes from Madras because we do not have microwave line. Even though we have brought it to the notice of the Minister on a number of occasions and demanded that a micro-wave line be introduced to enable us to get TV programmes from Madras, they have not been able to rectify it. We have only 10 KV relay station—or some such technical expression that we are told —at Kodaikanal where we get programmes relayed from Delhi. Sir, only 12 per cent of the total population of this country can understand English. Unfortunately, we come from different parts of the country from somewhere about two thousand miles away from the capital. Especially, in Kodaikanal, 95 per cent of the people are tribal people. They do not know English. Whenever I say anything against Hindi, particularly the Ministers and also the other persons belonging to Hindi-speaking areas think that I am speaking against it. But today I am going to speak against English also. You relay programmes only in Hindi and English and Kodaikanal gets these programmes relayed from Delhi. They do not get programmes from Madras—Tamil programmes; at least they know Tamil and they can see the programmes and understand them, and enjoy them. But they cannot understand what is telecast from Delhi because they can understand neither English nor Hindi. Therefore, what is the use of having the 10 KV station at Kodaikanal? The programmes relayed from Delhi are either in English or in Hindi. Of course, we have to bear with it now I and you cannot do anything because there is no microwave link at present.

Now, Sir, you are talking as if we are going to see the television all the 24 hours, as if we have no other work. We see the television just for two hours or so, between 7 P.M. and 10 or 10.30 P.M. I have been a Member of Parliament for the past ten years, either of the Lok Sabha or of this House. Anyhow, I have managed to be in Parliament for the past ten years.

SHRI GHULAM ROSOOL MATTO: You will continue.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: That I will tell you after June. Sir, I am not in a position to understand even a single word in Hindi, except one or two words like 'gadi' or 'chawal'. When this is the position of an educated person in Delhi, you can imagine the position of the five crores of people in Tamil Nadu, 55 lakhs of whom are in Madras city. That is why, in Tamil Nadu, by 9 P.M. when somebody announces something in Hindi, people shut down the television because they cannot understand a word of what follows.

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That is why, I started by saying that our country cannot be considered as a nation. After all, what is a nation? Nation is a territory consisting of different types of people, belonging to different regions, having different conventions, customs, practices and habits but having an underlying uniform culture. When this is the position, you are asking us to see programmes on the television, in a particular language, when there are fifteen national languages in the country. If you ask us to see the programmes telecast only in Hindi, do you mean to say that people will sit continuously before the television for two-three hours, without understanding the language? Why don't you introduce all the fifteen languages in a cycle so that people speaking different languages will be able to see programmes in their own language at least once or twice a month? Why do you impose a particular language and ask us, compel us, to sit before the television and see the programmes? This is one point. Sir, a very unhappy and unpleasant thing happened; some of the friends were saying. When a Hindi programme was being shown on T.V. students from a nearby school came and shut down the television and the television burst. They did this, this happened, because the programme was in Hindi, for the simple reason they could not understand the language. That is why, I suggest that the Kodaikanal station should be linked with Madras, so that the people will be able to see programmes for two hours or so because the programmes will be in Tamil at that time. We have already sent 5,000 television sets to this area. Recently, it has been decided to send another 5,000 colour television sets to Kodaikanal and the nearby rural areas.

In his connection, Sir, we have been demanding that we should be given a second channel. Madras is the gateway of South India, even though my friend, Mr. Upendra, may object to it after taking more funds from the Centre so that Hyderabad can prosper. If anything is to be sent to foreign countries from the Southern States, it has to go only through the Madras Port. Madras is one of the four major metropolitan cities. We have been demanding that we should be given a second channel. If you give us a second channel, we can use it for telecasting programmes in Tamil, specially after 9 P.M. so that the people can switch off the other channel and see this channel.

Tamil Nadu is what is called the tip of the nation. After that, is Sri Lanka. Just fifteen days back, there was a report that the Sri Lankan Government is propagating false news about the Indian Government and about the attitude of the Indian Government towards the Sri Lankan Government. If we have a station in Rameswaram or Kanyakumari, we can use it for countering the propoganda of the Sri Lankan Government, for giving a fitting answer to the false propaganda and we can even make the Sri Lankans see our television programmes. The distance between Sri Lanka and the southernmost tip of the country is only 20—30 miles and at some places, it is only 18—20 miles. We should set up a station at or near Rameswaram or Kanyakumari at least from the point of view of safety and security of the country. We have been asking for more colour OB vans. I, as a Member of Parliament, have been demanding it for the past more than seven years. The Ministers—of course, they have been changing—used to say that within a year we will get these OB vans. I do not know when we are going to get O.B. vans, where exactly the matter stands. The Minister had earlier said that within two to three months we will get the vans, but so far Madras and Calcutta have not got the vans. Delhi and Bombay have got them but not Madras and Calcutta. I am speaking for Calcutta also. I hope our Minister will take necessary steps to give O.B. vans to Madras and Calcutta.

Sir, the main purpose of TV is to look to the integrity of the nation. Whenever I used to go in for 'U' films....

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Blue films.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: What? I am talking of 'U' films.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Blue films.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: If at all you ask a question from a person who is hungry, what is four plus four, he will say, eight puris. He will say that because of the mentality that he is having. And when I am talking of 'U' films, he is talking of blue films. Whenever I go to see 'U' films along with my children, trailors of 'A' films are shown and we have to shut their eyes. Even though they know everything, still we have to shut their eyes. So, kindly see that trailors of 'A' films are not shown whenever 'U' films are going on in a theatre.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: I still feel you said blue films.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: All right. We are all experienced men and also I am coming from a State where you have somewhat noticed AIDS and all those things.

Sir, you have got a wonderful department called Censor Board. May be, you can say that it is transferred to the Human Resource Development Ministry. Now there is an officer at Madras and there is a misunderstanding between that officer and the producers of Tamil Nadu there.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI V. N. GADGIL): I do not want to interrupt, but in the recent reorganisation of Ministries, when the Ministry of Human Resource Development was created, Censor Board has been transferred to the Department of Culture. You can speak on it but I will not be able to deal with it. I will only convey your views to that department.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Even though it has been transferred to that Ministry, as I said, until and unless I knew the subject, I would not speak about it. Have you ever seen me talking about any subject, about any technical subject about which I knew nothing?

Sir, this misunderstanding is going on from the time this department was controlled by you and now it has been transferred to Mr. Narasimha Rao. Tamil Nadu is considered to be India's Hollywood. We take more than 250 pictures every year. We are getting crores and crores of rupees as entertainment tax. But this gentleman, even if a hero touches the heroine, just brings his scissors and cuts it. So, we should not imagine impossibilities. We are not in the period of Adam, we are in the second part of the 20th century where Human Resource Developoment Ministry has come forward to introduce Sexology as one of the subjects in schools. When this is the case, why a hero touching a lady should be taken as a crime? So, such things should not happen.

There is one more point. Sir, whenever Prime Minister of any other important VIPs came to Madras, we the MPs and other VIPs will go and receive them. Ministers will also go and receive them. But the Madras Doordarshan completely wipes off that part of the scene where actually the MPs or the State Ministers showed their face.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): So that you do not come into the fame.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: That may be the reason, that may be due to the size of the person, but actually they do not give that much importance. The TV media is one of the important media. That is why Prime Minister used to select important persons to be the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. This policy was adopted by the Janata administration, but States should also be given

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importance. Once, all the Chief Ministers were under the control of the Prime Minister, but now that is not the position. My Chief Minister is the leader of my party and he is not under the control of the Prime Minister. Likewise his Chief Minister is also not under the control of the Prime Minister. When Tamil Nadu was ruled by Congress Chief Minister, he was under the control of the Prime Minister. Anyhow he has to obey his orders. Now Sir, the importance of TV gives for the Prime Minister or for other VIPs from the Centre, that much importance is not given to the State Chief Minister. Kindly see to it that hereafter that much importance is given to the State Chief Minister who is the custodian of a State where more than 5 to 6 crores of people are living. That is number one. Number two, each and every M.P. is representing more than 8 to 9 lakhs of people. My Congress friends will excuse me if I say that whenever we M.Ps. are going and attending a particular function, they give preference to Congress M.Ps alone.

SHRI THANGABALU (Tamil Nadu): I am sorry to interrupt you. They are also not given proper importance.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: If that is the case, I wonder whether all the 39 M.Ps. from Tamil Nadu in the Lok Sabha and 19 in the Rajya Sabha.. (*Interruptions*).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Let him complete. Please don't interrupt him.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: You have to see that M.Ps. are given due importance. They think they are answerable to the Central Government employees, Central Government officers and Central Ministers and they are not answerable to the State Government officers and State Ministers and M.Ps. belonging to that particular State. Kindly see that due importance is given to the M.Ps.

Sir, All India Radio people are excellent people. Proceedings are going on in the Madras State Legislative Assembly. Here also proceedings are going on. AIR people are there; TV people are there. They report what has happened today in Parliament in "Today in Parliament". All these things they relay. Over the AIR when they say that a particular person 'A' has spoken on this and the next day we tell them that this was not spoken by 'A' but by 'B', they say: "Sorry, Sir, we will correct it". Not on one occasion but about half a dozen times it has so happened that they have changed the name of the person. And the reason they give is, "Sir, we are sending some persons who are not permanent employees of AIR, they are only temporary employees and we are not responsible for that". I want to know exactly one thing: even if a casual labourer is employed by an institution, they take the responsibility for his mistakes. Why should AIR not take the responsibility even though the mistake is committed by part-time or temporary employees? Why should they talk like that that they have not sufficient experience? Is that correct? If I speak anything, instead of saying "Mohanarangam spoke on a certain subjects", they say "Mr. Upendra spoke on this" how will I feel? Next day my leader will ask me. "Mr. Mohanarangam, why have you talked like that?" This should not happen. If both of them belong to the same party, it is not that harmful. But when they belong to different parties....

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: You are "loyal" Opposition.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: I am not opposing for opposition sake. We have got certain principles and convictions and I speak out of conviction and on principles. My leader has taught us duty, discipline and decency. All these three canons of democracy we are following for the past so many years.

Generally I would like to tell you one thing. TV in Madras is one of the main media during elections and on some other

occasions. So you please intimate to them that they should treat equally all the persons and there should not be any discrimination because of political affiliation, because of the party to which they belong or because of the institution to which they belong.

Number two, have you ever just taken care to see on what basis they recruit the employees. Are they recruited through employment exchanges? Or are they recruited through a certain agency? Have you ever seen only a particular group of people occupying the whole of the TV station. I do not want to mention which group is there but you just check up the statistics. And they even go to the extent of changing the language also. If a person reads news, that will not be textual Tamil as far as Tamil is concerned. If I speak, will speak perfect Tamil. But they speak in such a way that even a Tamilian would not understand what exactly they speak. They do not select the candidates according to merit but on the basis of relationship and they are selecting their kith and kin. So, kindly see about recruitment also.

Number two is about selection of pictures. You are showing pictures on the TV and you are spending lakhs and lakhs of rupees on that. I think you are spending every year a crore of rupees for a hundred pictures. On what basis are you selecting these pictures? Are you seeing the actors or the real merit of the films or certain other things that they follow at the time of producing the pictures? All these things you will have to consider. I don't think they consider all these things. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, all these things have to be kept in mind. Finally, as I said in the beginning, you will have to consider what I said about AIR.

Now about newspapers. Advertisements are freely given to the major newspapers and they always get the advertisements. But the small and regional language newspapers do not get advertisements unless and until they have recommendation. Therefore, kindly see to the interests of the small newspapers which have to be protected. The newspapers which are published in regional languages also should be protected. What is the use of unnecessarily giving advertisements to major newspapers which have got circulation of lakhs and lakhs of issues? So, you will have to give importance to them and provide facilities for the spread of regional language newspapers.

With these words, Sir, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH (Gujarat): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it has been the objective of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and, in wider terms, the objective of the media, particularly TV and radio, to inform, educate and entertain with a view to creating awareness among the people about the Nation's all round development and involving people's participatin in the implementation of the policies, plans and programmes of the Government.

Sir, the electronic media which has gained significance in the last decade has been trying hard to keep pace with the development of the Nation and the development which is going on in the world and simultaneously keeping up with the aspirations and expectations of the people. Television in India has completed its silver jubilee and in the last three years it has expanded on an unprecedented scale both in terms of area and audience. The use of satellites and a national network of TV stations have been established all over the country in the last two to three years. This sensational development has a profound effect on our people and particularly on their life-styles. A clear perspective on software planning and production is therefore urgently needed. How far the Government has accomp'ished this task, I think only the honourable Minister will be able to answer.

The Government has set up a working group on software for Doordarshan with Prof. P. C. Joshi as its Chairman. This

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group has already submitted its report. A Media Advisory Committee headed by Shri G. Parthasarathy has gone into the report in detail and already its findings are before the Ministry. I am surprised why the same report and the recommendations of the Media Advisory Committee have again been sent to Doordarshan and AIR for their comments. I have conveyed my misgivings on this issue several times and I am yet to satisfy myself. If their views have been given before the two committees, then there is no need to subject the report of the Joshi Committee and the recommendations of the Media Advisory Committee again to the scrutiny of Doordarshan and AIR. Even if it is so, how long will these two organizations take to form their own conclusions so that the PC Joshi Committee report can be implemented as early as possible? Sir, it has been claimed that nearly 66.5 per cent of the country's population has been provided with TV service, and by the end of the Sixth Plan the expected coverage, according to the hon. Minister was 70 per cent. I still wonder whether this is only as far as the transmission area is concerned or actual viewing. Sir, the number of TV sets in the country are so less and concentrated in major cities and towns and electricity in the villages so scarce that it is impossible to achieve this target in our country. Sir, I would like to know from the Minister what actually is meant by 70 per cent coverage.

Sir, the Seventh Plan envisages a Plan outlay of Rs. 700 crores for the Doordarshan, and if replacement and modernisation of equipment is to be done in nearly 29 programme production centres as enunciated in the report of the Ministry, the entire outlay will not be sufficient only for this item. Creation of more facilities, augmentation of the existing facilities, expansion of the transmitter network and the second channel service will inevitably require more funds. Sir, I would like the Minister to throw some light on what will be spent on each of these items. If all the Plan outlay is to be spent on hardware, what will be the share of the software?

Sir, the Ministry has also thought of providing a three-tier TV service in our country—primary, national and local. I would like to know whether it has got the necessary infrastructure for the same. I understand that community-viewing TV sets have been provided by the Government of India in six States. The number of such sets is 2,000 very high frequency (VHF) sets and 2,000 direct reception (DR) sets, and it is estimated that under the Seventh Plan this number will reach 11,000. But my question to the Minister is whether only 11,000 sets in lakhs of villages in the country would be an answer to the grewing needs and the growing curiosity of the people in the country. Sir, I also fail to understand why whereas the AIR has been allotted Rs. 700 crores for the Seventh Five-Year Plan, the Doordarshan has been treated in the same way. If you claim 70 per cent coverage by TV and if you want to expand it, the Doordarshan certainly deserves more funds.

Sir, coming to the structure of the Doordarshan and the AIR, I would like to suggest that in order to give functional autonomy to these two important electronic media of the I&B Ministry some kind of a cultural commission should be established at the national level just as the Planning Commission and that experts in the field of mass communication should be appointed on the commission to supervise these organisations and to chalk out the role of the Dordarshan in this country. Sir, this would give credibility to the Doordarshan, and the serious lapses which have been occurring recently in the Doordarshan could be avoided.

Sir, we know the controversy regarding the postponement or rather cancellation of telecast of the film "Rajiv's India" and the omission of the news item about the disappearance of Charles Sobhraj from the Delhi Tihar Jail. These are but a few examples of the confusion prevailing in the present set-up in the Doordarshan.

Sir, the other things which the people of this country look forward to as far as the relevance of the Doordarshan is concerned are importance of local production and areaspecific programmes

to meet the needs of the people and the educational and developmental roles the television can play in a country like India. It has also been observed that TV should genuinely serve the interests of a diverse audience and specialised sectors like women, children, students and farmers, who need to be specially cared for in this country.

This brings us to the important question of the quantum and role of the sponsored programes, the commercialised and imported programmes. I understand we have been given an assurance by the hon. Minister— I am very glad about it—that 11 per cent time is consumed by the sponsored programmes. Though I am not against good imported programmes like those on wild life, serials on nature and films on space programmes and scientific advancement, I strongly feel that mediocre and urbanised sponsored programmes serve very little purpose to the vast rural audience in this country. I also feel that the value system that we are preaching on TV through sponsored programmes has an adverse effect on not only the rural masses, but even on the lower and middle class people also in our major cities.

Here comes the role and place of video in relation to television and whether video law is complementary or antagonistic to TV is also to be decided now by the Ministry once and for all. It has been observed that video has come to stay in the cities where TV viewing is the maximum.

The impact of advertising on the minds of the TV viewers have also been studied scientifically because the utility of advertisements is sometimes overdone. I had brought this to the attention of he hon. Minister many times that some advertisements are perverse and tend to suggest things which are not at all feasible nor physically possible. Advertisements, therefore, should be positive and not only promotional.

I would also like to know the fate of the two committees, one for screening the sponsored programmes and another for feature films, which were to be announced by the Ministry. The decision was taken nearly six months ago, but the personnel on the Committee have still not been appointed. In the absence of these Committees the clearance of the sponsored programmes is being done by three officials of the Doordarshan. Obviously there are a lot of complaints regarding clearance and rejection of the sponsored programmes and favouritism and things like that.

The issue of video piracy is also important because video piracy is on the increase. The Cinematograph Act, 1952 was amended in 1984, but the enforcement of the law is left to the State Government. Secondly, the Central Board of Film Certification has also been taken out of the I & B Ministry and placed under the Human Resource Development Ministry. Hence the infringement of Copyright though cognizable and non-bailable, is not properly dealt with due to multiplicity of authorities. The Ministry may throw some light as to how local authorities have been taking appropriate action for violation of this Act.

One of the most important issues that I have raised in the Consultative Committee of this Ministry is the formation and declaration of the national media policy. In this connection I am thankful to the hon. Minister that while he was the Minister of Communications, he had evolved and given thought to the National Communications Policy, which, *inter-alia* would include the media policy also. I make a fer- 6.00 P.M. vent appeal to the Minister that serious thought should be given to this issue and a national policy on media be announced as early as possible.

Sir, I also request the Honourable Minister to formulate the newsprint allocation policy for the year 1985-86 and announce the policy so that the newspapers get the facilities which are to be expanded by the Government.

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Sir, I would also like to know whether the I&B Ministry is being restructured. According to some newspaper reports the offices of Press Information Bureau in the State capitals are to be closed down and a number of other Departments are to be merged together. If these steps are taken to effect administrative efficiency and economy, I welcome the move. But I would certainly like to know, whether this would result in any discontinuance of the existing facilities by termination of services of the employees concerned. In this connection I also want to draw the attention of the Government that two of the periodicals published by the Ministry, namely, 'Yojana' in English and Hindi and 'Indian and Foreign Review' in English are examples of good production and I request the Government to continue publishing the same as both contain articles by eminent scholars and academicians.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Please conclude.

SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: I am concluding, Sir. Lastly, I would like to raise the issue of the employees rendered jobless in the two language news agencies, namely, 'Samachar Bharati' and 'Hindustan Samachar'. I understand the Government has requested the PTI and UNI to absorb to the extent possible these employees, but there is a limitation. I would plead that there should be a proposal to recruit these employees in Government media and preference should be given to them.

With these few observations, I conclude my speech. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P. KAUSHIK): Mr. Vishwa Bandhu Gupta.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: But you told we will adjourn at 6 O'clock.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. P KAUSHIK): After Mr. Vishwa Bandhu Gupta we will adjourn.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA (Delhi): With your permission, I want to speak.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: I want to hear you.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: All right. I will be very brief.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the demands of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Indeed I would support an even more liberal allocation of funds and resources to the Ministry. When we have set ourselves the goal of moving into the 21st century in its appropriate time scale, we are caught up with certain imperatives. In evitably we are caught up with the rest of the world in a developing information society that is unfolding itself with astonishing rapidity. Its compulsions are there and we are a part of it whether we like it or not. I suggest that we like it and be prepared for it. Only the most obscurantist will set themselves against it and try to oppose it.

Sir, the technological revolution with its almost total accent on information and informatics is so overwhelming and rapid that it can totally confuse us if we are not fully prepared. It can act for good or bad depending on how we meet it. With an enlightened leadership, such as we have today, at many levels and I include ourselves in it, there is no reason why we should not opt for the good. We have in our country some of the finest minds, intelecutually and technlogically that we are, indeed, fortunate that we can make the optimum use of the opportunity as it presents itself. We already have an inkling of it, more than an inkling, Sir, an impressive display in the past few years. I will not go into the details—they are familiar enough to all of you. In one area of information and comunication, namely, televisin alone, the expansion has been truly fantastic and we must give our scientists and technologists heartiest congratulations for their ability to produce in this country itself, not imported, the necessary hardware to cover over seventy per cent of the country in the course of a bare year. I do not think this feat in a developing country like ours has been fully understood or appreciated even amongst ourselves.

While giving full marks to our scientists and technologist we must, however, note with considerable regret that the requisite software, namely, the programming, has been very inadequate and confused. I agree, Sir, that it is not entirely the fault of the authorities and the dedicated men and women who operate this electronic medium. They have not only been overwhelmed by the sudden extent and reach of television but also by the complex, very complex nature of the diversity of our enourmous land embracing fantastic variety of languages, life-styles, modes of thought and cultural streams, together making a rich fabric but bewildering when dealt with *in detail. It is a daunting task to handle* this complicated situation. Most other countries, particularly the developed ones do not face such problems. They are homogenous in almost all matters, and by virtue of their being developed, are spared certain imperatives which we face, as for example, illiteracy, education, health, numbers etc. which can be handled easily there but which in our case seem almost unmanageable. Television and radio in these developed countries are almost wholly devoted to entertainment. Other areas such as information and particularly education are marginal. But for us the latter issues are very vital—almost a question of survival and progress—and we have to see how the powerful opportunities for advancement provided by these media are fully and gainfully employed.

The hon'ble Minister recently said that television was a subject on which everyone had a say, and was determined to say it. Quite true. It is a medium reaching into the home and family and profoundly affecting it, influencing attitudes, life-styles, personal conduct and even daily routine. It is a good thing that instead of dumbly and meekly accepting it, people are articulate about it. Indeed it is a right thing in a democratic society and I am glad that instead of husing it, the Government and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are encouraging the widest debate on the subject and gathering feed back so that they can proceed in a companionable way with the people taking into view their feelings—rather than imposing something in disregard of public opinion. I hope the various efforts being made to seek and understand the popular response will bear the most fruitful results so that we can use these media to the best advantage.

Sir, there are some vital national objectives such as unity, integrity and integration which we have set for ourselves. There are social objectives such as a homogenous society, economic justice, secular justice education for all, an enlightened citizenry which also we look towards fulfilling. In all these, the mass media can now play a critical role on a mass scale.

For a truly effective role for these media there are certain absolute imperatives which I will briefly outline and which I hope the nation and government will appreciate and implement.

First and foremost is freedom of operation. Without freedom the media, or for that matter any other enterprise, cannot function to the best advantage. As a nation which put up a monumental and inspiring battle for freedom, I need not elaborate on the virtues of freedom. When we come to the media, the question of their freedom has been much discussed and it agitates many minds. I do not think there is any dispute that the media and in this case I talk about the electronic media, radio and television need to function in an atmosphere of freedom. It stands to reason that we cannot expect radio and television to function effectively if they are stifled, hamstrung and interfered with. It would be unfair to criticise and be labour them in such conditions. But what freedom they need is a matter on which there is no agreement. Some people argue for what they call privatisation, which means the free play of market forces. I do not think that that is an ideal solution. Indeed the remedy may be worse than the disease. All our bjectives which I had set forth earlier would be ignored as market forces come into play. I do not see the particular virtue of being

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beholder to business houses if the Government is unacceptable, Rather we should look for alternative ways in which the media can effectively function. In this connection, I am glad that the Ministry is considering ways in which there can be maximum functional autonomy for radio and television and indeed all other wings which fall within its purview.

Sir, the other important aspect that needs to be tackled with the greatest vigour is professionalism. With services expanding so rapidly, the need for a work force that is extremely professional becomes almost desperate. It is a great pity that over the years we have been unable to set up any institutions worth the name to produce professionals in the media. And in this case, I include, the print media, namely the press. People are taken into the profession largely on the basis of their promise and then they evolve on the job itself. Some of them on their own become professional in time and others do not. Many who do not might have become sterling practitioners if only they had the proper training and were not left to fend for themselves. I think it is rather unfair for media people to be criticised day in and day out for their lack of professionalism in such circumstances. It is for us rather to set up institutions for training before the job and to provide training facilities in the job. This is a matter of concern not only to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting but to all who desire a better performance from the media. In this context, it would be idle to pretend that the print media has all professionalism and the electronic media none. The patent fact is that both could do with considerably more training and training opportunities. I note with interest that the hon. Minister has promised that in the sphere of radio and television news, he will import profesionals to do a better job. It is all to the good that he should think in these terms. But I hope it will not simply mean getting people from journalism. It is, alas, an errorneous view that a good newspaper man will make a good radio or television newsman. The requirements are so different that qualification in one may be, and often is, a disqualification in the other. It is better that people come fresh to understand and learn the peculiar and special needs of handling news on the electronic media. In this conection I have been mystified that an item of news of major magnitude, the nuclear accident in the Soviet Union, which first came on the teleprinter yesterday afternoon and developed thereafter, should find no mention in the radio and TV news at all (*Interruptions*) The first mention in a very cursory way came on the radio this morning at 8, not even 6 am.

Sir, even if you have autonomy in working and professionalism in qualification, nothing much will be achieved unless there are adequate facilities and a proper organisation. It is a great pity that even experienced and thoughtful observers are constantly comparing the output of Western media organisations with India on a one-to-one basis. It is so unfair that it is surprising that it persists. The condition, there of affluence, the facilities, the scope are so abundant compared with the stringency under which our people are called upon to produce results that a one-to-one comparison is cruel. I am not justifying carelessness, shodiness and an I-don't-care attitude. But let us also realise the difficult circumstances in which our people operate and thereafter wonder how results, and in many cases, excellent results are obtained at all. Here again it is for us to provide the optimum opportunities and facilities for the bounding talent in this country which can flower and bring credit to the electronic media.

I believe the organisation of the whole edifice of the media also needs very careful scrutiny. Recent debate has brought out the fact that a massive monolithic organisation may not be able to function most effectively. Indeed it may be unfair to expect effective functioning with the dead weight of the organisation bearing down on the people operating it. I think

the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should give serious thought to how the organisations dealing particularly with the electronic media could be diversified so that they can breathe more freely and operate with greater elasticity and effectiveness.

I must also bring to the notice of the Minister the exorbitant price of indigenous newsprint for which a solution has to be found for the healthy growth of the press. We also have to ensure a fair and just level of wages for all those engaged in this information industry.

I have no doubt that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is fully aware of the enormous responsibilities that have been cast upon it by the technological revolution sweeping the world. I have no doubt it is fully conscious of the opportunities held out by this revolution and I have also no doubt that it is sincere and honest in its desire to grasp the opportunities and fulfil its responsibilities. The Ministry and all those labouring in it deserve our fullest support and I am sure we shall give it handsomely. Thank you.

ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR DISPOSAL OF GOVERNMENT AND OTHER BUSINESS

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M.P. KAUSHIK): I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held today, the 30th April, 1986, allotted time for Government Legislative and other Business as follows:

Business	Time allotted
1. Consideration and return of the following Bills, as passed by the Lok Sabha :—	
(a) The Finance Bill, 1986	2 days
(b) The Tea (Amendment) Bill, 1986.	2 hours
2. Discussion on the Resolution seeking approval of the draft Ministers' (Allowances, Medical Treatment and Other Privileges) Amendment Rules, 1986	1 hour
3. Consideration and passing of the following Bills, as passed by the Lok Sabha:—	
(a) The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund (Repeal) Bill, 1986 .	1 hour
(b) The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill 1986	1 day
(c) The Swadeshi Cotton Mills Company Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Bill, 1986	1 hour
4. Discussion on the Resolution seeking approval of the New Education Policy	2 days

In order to complete the Government Business, the Committee recommended that the present Session of the Rajya Sabha be extended up to the 13th May, 1986 and accordingly, the House should sit on Monday, the 12th and Tuesday, the 13th May, 1986, for the transaction of the Government Business and that there would be no Question Hour on these days.

The House now stands adjourned till 11 A.M. on Friday, the 2nd May, 1986.

The House then adjourned at twenty minutes past six of the clock, till eleven of the clock, on Friday, the 2nd May, 1986.

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